7:Crowder J-5 (1955-1958) 1959
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Wolof MS 30

hair fixed on either side of the head, from which they protrude like thin curled horns. Another trick is to fix balls of black velvet or twists of black sisal. Strands of soft black silk are commonly used in their coiffure today, and they hang in nearly every small store, a baffling commodity to those unacquainted with Jollof fashions.

To these wigs the rich and fashionable Jollof woman fixes huge pendants of gold filigree, beautifully worked by the local craftsmen. The really chic touch is a bunch of gold coins—Louis D'Ors, American dollars and Franz-Josephs, or English Guineas—hanging from false plaits over the forehead, preferably coquettishly to one side. Gold is indispensable to their ensemble. A really wealthy Jollof lady seems to be covered with it: great ear-rings, pin brooches, heavy gold rings on the finger, ear-rings and tiny rings placed all round the outside of the ear and Tudor toe-rings.

A Jollof woman spends considerable time on her make-up. Her lips are tattooed with indigo, sometimes even on their pink insides. A thin blue line is tattooed on to the lower eyelid, immediately under the lashes, making her eyes seem much larger than they are. Eyelashes are painted with black dye, and the white palms of the hands and the soles of the feet are stained black as well. Their long, bejewelled fingers are crowned with nails painted with red nail varnish or an orange stain.

This ensemble gives the Jollof woman something of the gracious artificiality of appearance that marked the fashions of the Empire period. Geoffrey Gover,† in his book *Africa Dances*, described their behaviour as continually provocative. 'Their movement, their glances, their sighs, their manner of speaking, are all, almost subconsciously, alluring.'

So striking is the Jollof dress that it has been adapted by African women all over the Senegal, and is copied as far distant as Niger and Ivory Coast.

A CULTURAL DILEMMA

Dakar

One evening Arnold and I went to the Théâtre du Palais, a small, neat theatre owned by the Government in the centre of Dakar. We were to see a production of tribal dancing by Sereres

† [This should read Gorer--Analyst]

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called 'Les Ballets Sereres du Sine Saloum,' a group of dancers who had won the Territorial Cup in 1957.

The theatre was packed. I was sitting next to an ample Jollof matron, a small child strapped to her back, its tiny nose buried in the pink muslin of her dress. Another child sat on her knee, beturbanned and clothed just like its mother. From the woman's forehead dangled three shining American dollars. Unfortunately a similar Jollof woman sat immediately in front of me, her black horsehair wig and tall tulle turban almost totally obscuring my view. A strong scent of 'Bint El Sudan' manufactured in East London perfumed the room as the curtains rose to the first dance, 'Love and its Caprices', which was to be the theme of the evening. The variations, the programme told me, were to include '*Allo M'Bissine*'—'My fiancée has beaten me because a boy who loves me told me "Hello M'Bissine" ', and later '*Khodia Kha Lola*'—'Why do you cry Khodia? Only the Gods understand what a tear says'. Ending with an initiation dance of future circumcision candidates. One of the most memorable dances was a solo by a woman with a baby strapped to her back, its head swaying backwards and forwards like a punch ball. The child uttered not a murmur as its mother danced into a frenzy, singing at the top of her voice, and in the background a corps of drums beat an hysterical rhythm. It was an entertaining evening, with a beautiful dance of a slight youth, his black-brown body shining sleekly in the glow of the footlights, contrasting with the powdered copper of his lissom partner, a girl of singular beauty with entrancing opalescent eyes.

After the performance there was a cast party to which Faye, the young secretary of the theatre, invited me. The dancers, various guests, European and African, drank bottles of Coca-Cola and orange squash. Amongst them was Ka Abdou Anta.

He was a handsome young man, but he dragged continuously at a cigarette and his teeth were discoloured with nicotine. His jacket, once well cut, was misshapen by papers stuffed into the pockets. My first meeting with Ka had been two years before but we had not been introduced. He was rehearsing a scene from his play *La Fille des Dieux*, which he was producing for the Théâtre du Palais. It was highly symbolic: a somewhat uneasy compromise between tribal metaphysics and the classical French